SOURCES OF INSPIRATION FOR BRYAN MONEY
1896 – 1900

SILVER vs GOLD

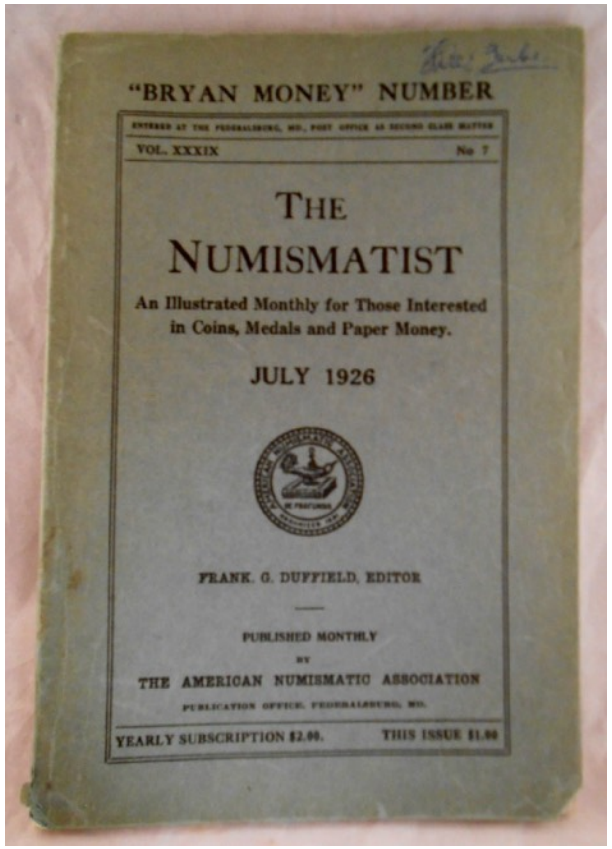
Traditional ratio of gold to silver was 16 to 1

1896 spot price of gold was 20.67; spot price of silver was .68

1896 ratio of gold to silver was about 30 to 1

The United States was experiencing a depression with high unemployment and falling prices.

- While the dual monetary standard had been in use since the US Mint was established in 1792, it was eliminated as a result of the Coinage Act of 1873, and became a major political issue during the presidential elections of 1896 and 1900 elections.
- Republican platform favored use of the gold standard, which limited the amount of money in circulation.
- Democratic platform favored the free coinage of silver, which mostly meant unrestricted issuance of silver coinage, which would increase the money supply, cause inflation, and make it easier for farmers to pay their debts.
- The issue was not limited to the United States.

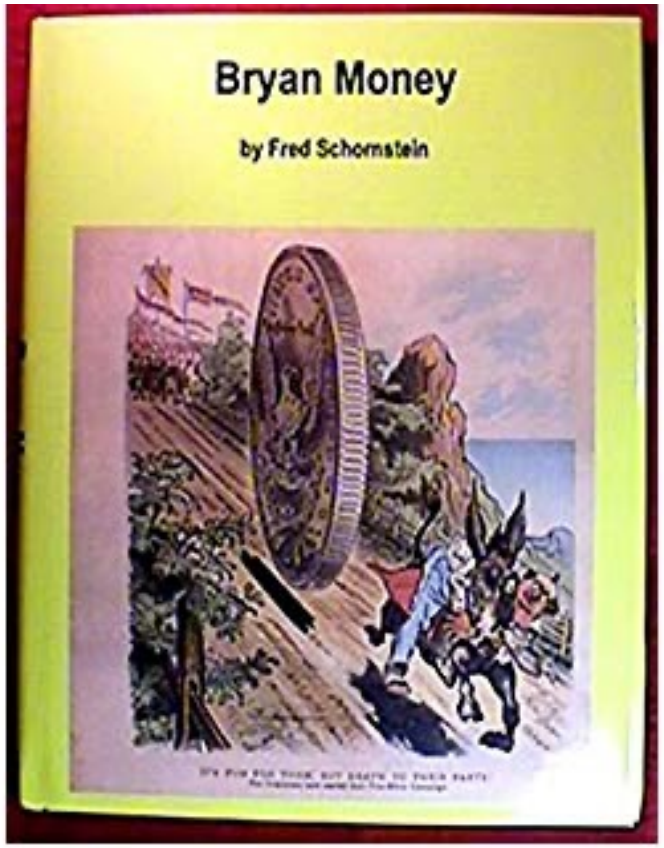


- The July 1926 issue of The Numismatist was designated the “Bryan Money” Number. It was largely composed of articles by Farran Zerbe, who described the various numismatic items relating to the question of free silver vs. the gold standard.

William McKinley

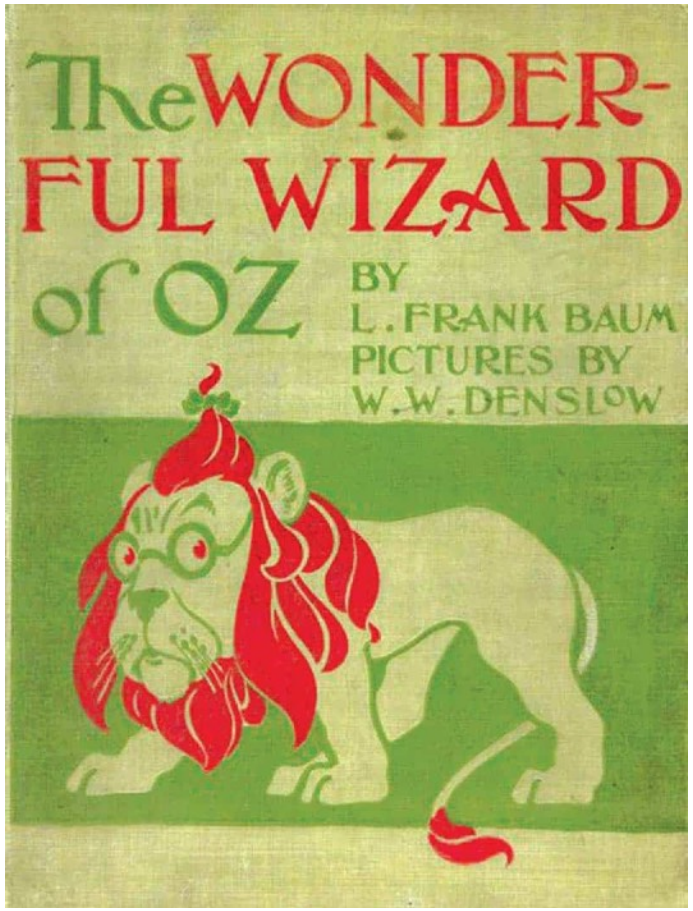
William Jennings Bryan

- In his catalogue, Zerbe included 141 different examples of Bryan Money, medals or tokens that were issued in opposition to the candidacy of the Democratic Party nominee, William Jennings Bryan.
- A second article in the same issue, also by Zerbe, was entitled “Pro-Silver or Anti-Gold Tokens”, and listed a scant 3 pieces.



- In 2001, an updated work by Fred Schornstein was published by the Token and Medal Society, with a supplement issued in 2012.

DESPITE SOME CLAIMS TO THE CONTRARY, THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH FREE SILVER.



"The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" was written solely to pleasure children of today. It aspires to being a modernized fairy tale, in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heart-aches and nightmares are left out.

L. Frank Baum
Chicago, April 1900

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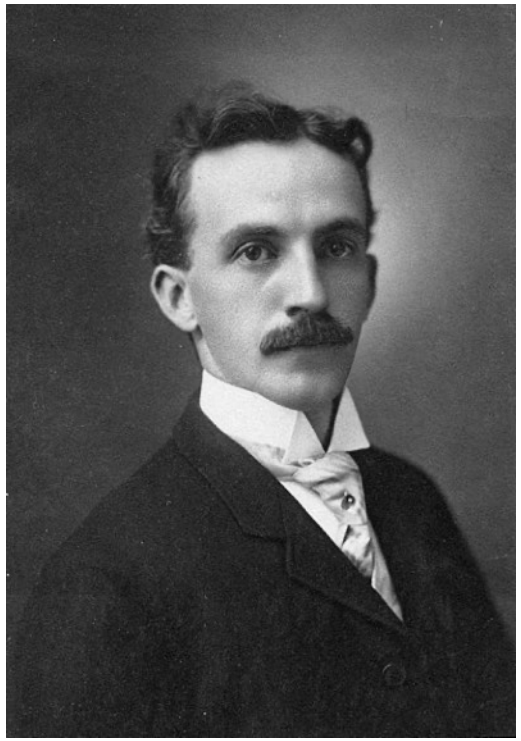
- Most examples of Bryan money, also known as Bryan dollars, can be classified into one of two general types. The first, consists of issues crudely struck in base medal. Many of these bear designs that were clearly based on current coins in circulation at the time, such as the Morgan silver dollar. Only a few show a high quality of workmanship and design.

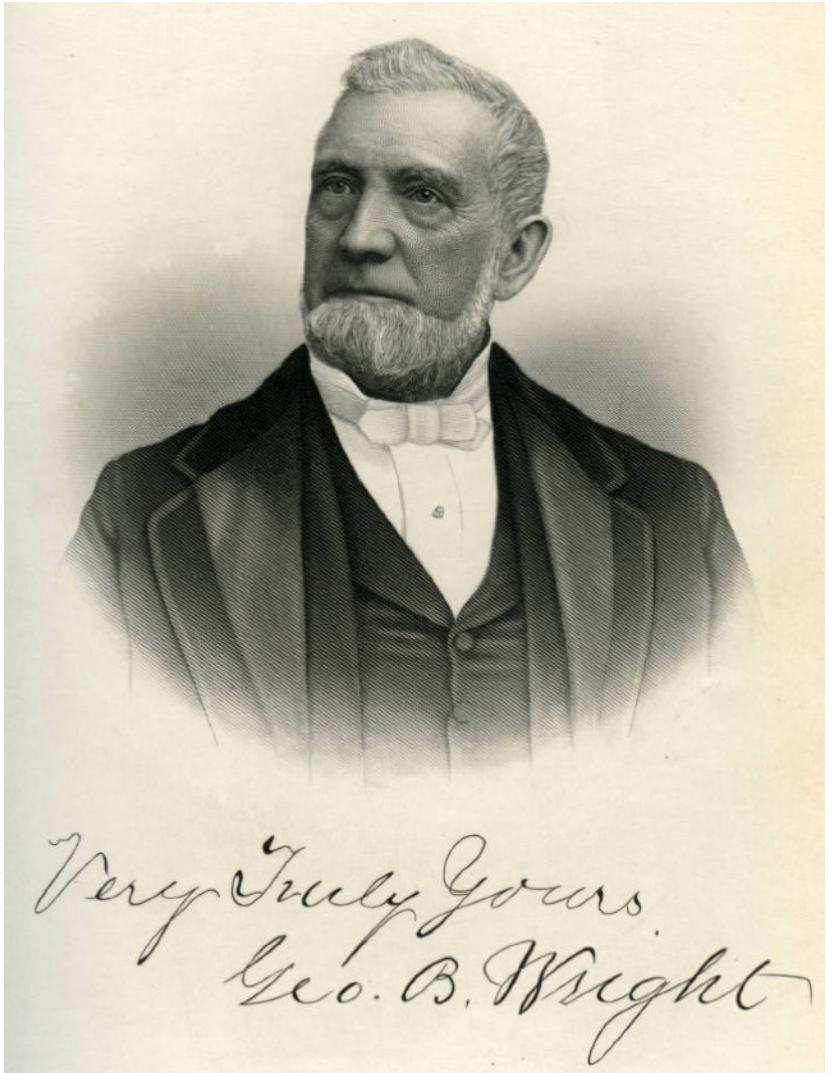


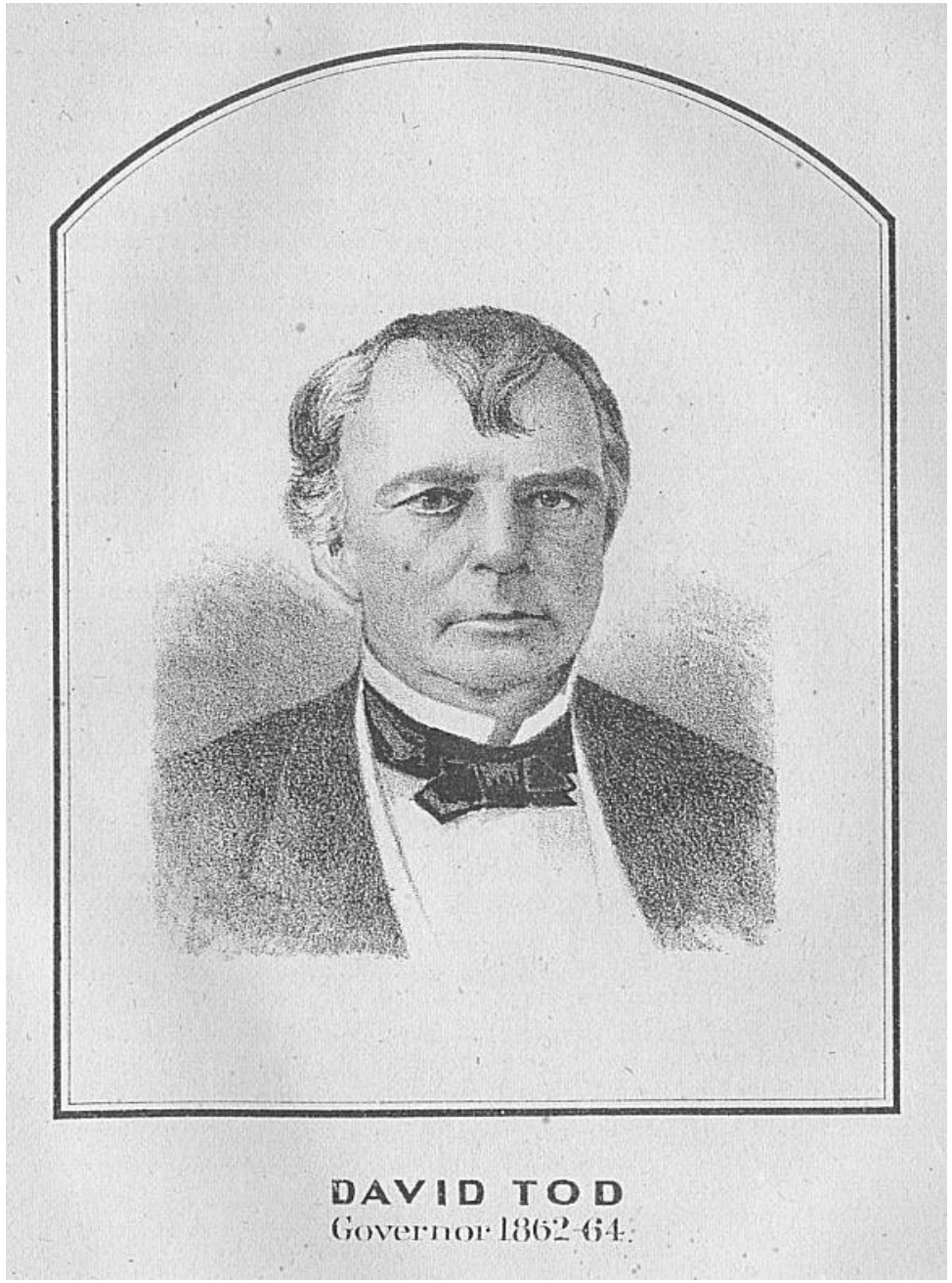
In the introduction to his catalogue, Zerbe claimed the first production of Bryan Money may have been suggested by memories of a base medal, satirical token relating to the unsuccessful, 1843 Ohio gubernatorial campaign of one David Tod (1805 – 1868), who is said to have claimed in a speech, that he would “prefer pot metal to shinplasters”.

- In 1911 Zerbe interviewed Fred H. Tibbetts, who was believed to be the first person to issue Bryan Money. Tibbetts claimed to have been inspired by the 1843 gubernatorial election, when David Tod, the Democratic candidate and an advocate of hard money, issued pot metal “Tod Dollars” in support of his campaign.

- Tibbetts did not actually learn of Tod Dollars until 1899.

In writing about Tod dollars in his 1899 article, George Bohan Wright, who knew Tod, claims Tod was able to procure one of the dollars, and remembered that Tod used it as a paperweight in his office.





- In fact, “Tod Dollars” were issued by Tod’s Whig opponents, and consisted of two issues – one cent pieces, and Tod dollars.

- It is not known if any examples have survived.

Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

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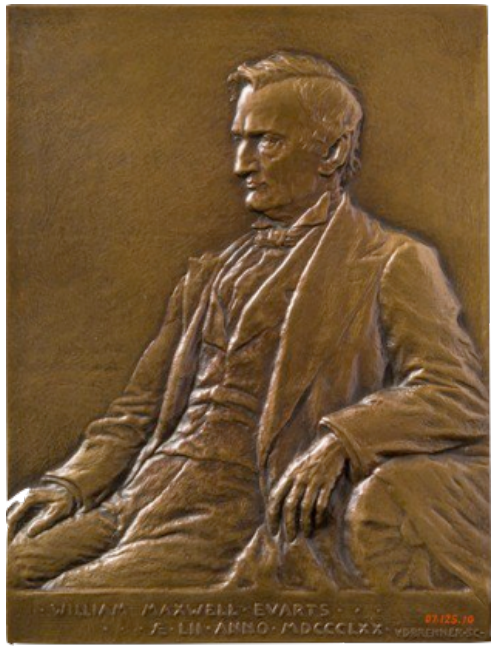
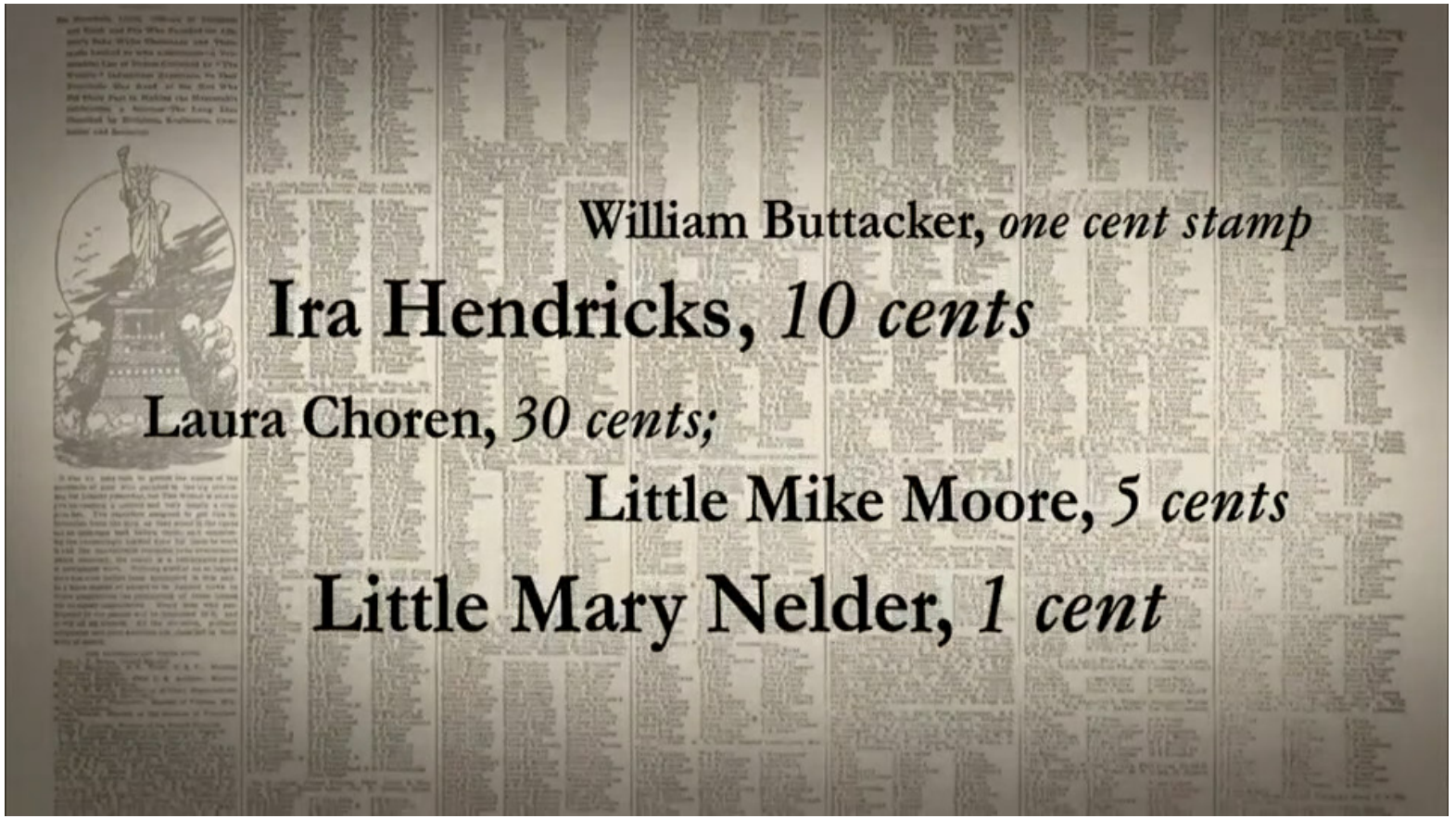
- The second type of Bryan Money are comparative issues, and indicate they contain silver worth one dollar, as well as the size and weight of a standard dollar.
- These were struck by three firms – Tiffany & Co., Gorham Manufacturing Co., and Spaulding & Co.

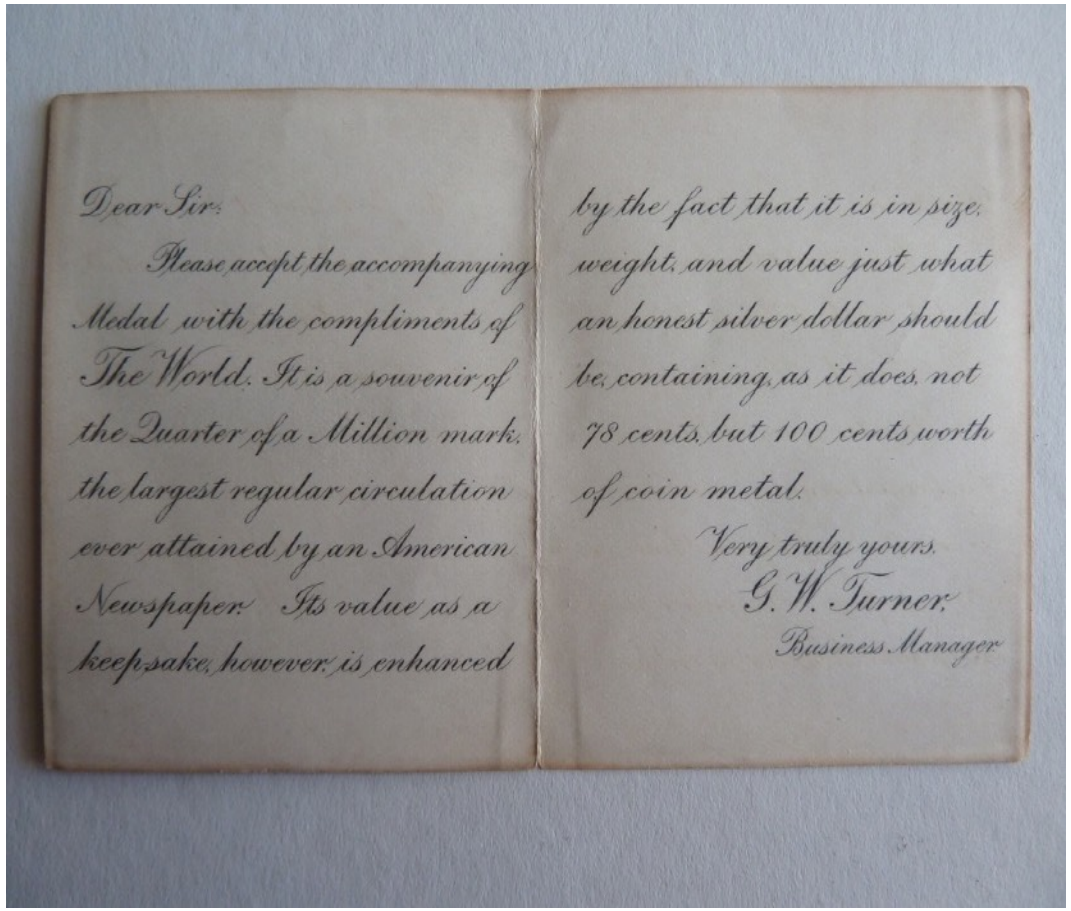


William Maxwell Evarts
By Victor D. Brenner

Joseph Pulitzer



- The inspiration for this type of Bryan money probably came from a little known medal issued by The World, a popular New York newspaper.
- This medal was issued to mark The World being the first American newspaper to achieve a circulation in excess of 250,000.
- The designer was an obscure engraver named George A. Rowe.



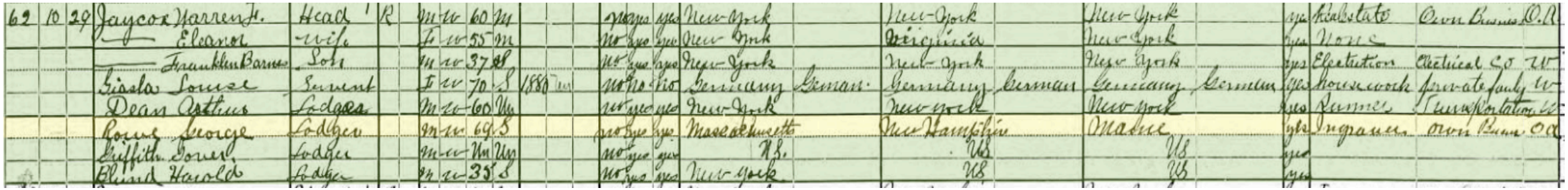
Dear Sir:

Please accept the accompanying Medal with the compliments of The World. It is a souvenir of the Quarter of a Million mark, the largest regular circulation ever attained by an American Newspaper. Its value as a keepsake, however, is enhanced by the fact that it is in size, weight, and value just what an honest silver dollar should be, containing, as it does, not 78 cents, but 100 cents worth of coin metal.

Very truly yours,
G. W. Turner,
Business Manager

- Accompanying the medal was a small, paper leaflet bearing a note from G. W. Turner, Business Manager of The World, which states “Its value as a keepsake, however, is enhanced by the fact that it is in size, weight and value just what an honest silver dollar should be, containing as it does not 78 cents, but 100 cents worth of coin metal”.

1920 FEDERAL CENSUS



WILKS BUILDING, NEXT TO THE STOCK EXCHANGE

actions.

THE VATICAN BANK.

"Colonel" Leybourn's Scheme Pronounced a Fraud.

NEW YORK, December 7.—Archbishop Corrigan was seen this afternoon in regard to the statement published this morning that a great Roman Catholic bank, with a capital of $100,000,000, was about to be started in this city, in which the Vatican would place all its money for investment in American enterprises to keep it safe from the possibility of seizure by the Italian Government, should there be a rupture, etc. The Archbishop said: "You can deny the whole thing most positively. I have never in any shape or form given any sanction or countenance to Leybourn's scheme.

ATTEMPTED HARI KARI.

Colonel Leybourne's Tragic Act at Rome.

HIS BIG CATHOLIC BANK SCHEME.

Monetary Losses Are Said to Have Caused The Act—He Now Lies in a Precarious State and Cannot Possibly Recover from His Injuries.

ROME, July 20.—Colonel Leybourne, well known in New York in connection with the Catholic banking scheme, attempted suicide here in the Japanese style hari kari, by disemboweling himself with a razor. He now lies in a very precarious state, with little hopes of recovery. Money losses are said to have been the cause of the attempt.

QUESTIONS??